

Biosecurity for Maine NRCS

Review NRCS biosecurity policy at GM 130 403 H. Follow guidelines and procedures in part 403.84 when working on livestock and poultry farms.

Disease organisms can be unknowingly spread by farm workers, visitors, consultants, veterinarians, etc. It is our responsibility to ensure that we do not carry disease organisms with us as we go from farm to farm. Common ways of spreading these organisms is through the transport of mud and manure on boots and vehicles. **Note**— you are not aware of what organisms are present at each farm you visit, and the owner may not be aware, either. Assume that every farm is a potential risk, and act accordingly. Producers need your cooperation in this matter, and most will appreciate your vigilance.

Keep in mind that biosecurity is important to crop growers as well as livestock producers. Disease is a concern with small fruit and vegetable growers; blights, bacterial ring rot, spindle tuber, net necrosis, mosaics and leafroll in potatoes; verticillium wilt in strawberries; bacterial blights, anthracnose and rust in beans; blights, verticillium wilt and leaf spots in cucurbits.

- Plan schedule so as to work in fields during the period of time when crops are not growing if possible.
- Avoid walking through fields where crops are growing.
- Avoid driving into crop fields where crops are growing, especially after visiting another crop field. Park at entrances to crop fields or along field roads.

Field staff vehicles will need to be checked to ensure that they have the following items on hand for farm visits:

- Rubber boots and/or disposable boots
- Dish pan/ scrub brush (toilet or similar) for boot cleaning
- Virkon-S powder and/or bleach
- Gallon jug with water for mixing Virkon-S or bleach
- Safety goggles, dust mask, rubber gloves for mixing and using chemicals
- Hand sanitizer and paper towels
- Empty garbage bags for transport for disposal of dirty items
- Disposable coveralls for times when livestock contact cannot be avoided.
- Container to hold these items in each vehicle

Biosecurity Levels:

On a routine basis, follow the procedures outlined for Levels 1, 2, and 3 (GM 130_403.84), whichever is appropriate for the situation. NRCS Employees are to avoid level 3 situations (direct animal contact or close proximity) if at all possible.

Vehicles:

Recognizing that many farms do not have paved or concrete roads and driveways, the following procedures will minimize the need to wash tires and wheel wells:

- Park the vehicle as close to roadway as possible and walk to facilities or job site.
- Avoid mud and areas contaminated by manure.

- Don't drive in pastures and crop fields where manure has been applied. Park at entrances or along field roads.
- Attempt to limit number of NRCS or partner vehicles from entering farm. Meet off farm and drive one vehicle to the farm.

Boots and Equipment:

Before leaving farm, clean and disinfect boots and equipment (including survey instruments) that come in contact with ground. Boots and dirty parts of equipment must be thoroughly cleaned *before* disinfecting. Use the farm water hose or scrub brush and soap and water to clean all soil and manure off boots and equipment and out of boot treads. **POUR INTO TUB OR BUCKET ONLY ENOUGH DISINFECTANT SOLUTION NEEDED TO DISINFECT BOOTS AND EQUIPMENT.** Disinfect boots and equipment using scrub brush. Unused disinfectant should be discarded in accordance with label instructions, generally onto a graveled road or surface, and away from desirable plants, surface water and ditches.

***** Be sure to clean and disinfect tripod legs, bottom of survey rods, shovels, augers, and other equipment.***

Disinfectants:

During a disease outbreak or known standing problem, use **Virkon-S** or another EPA approved disinfectant. Virkon-S is a powder and has to be mixed with water to make a 1% solution. The powder is corrosive and may cause skin burns and irreversible eye damage. Harmful if swallowed, absorbed through skin, or inhaled. Wear safety glasses, goggles, or face shield; dust or particle mask; long sleeve shirt; and latex gloves when mixing Virkon-S with water. Remove contaminated clothing and wash before reusing. Virkon-S solution loses some of its effectiveness 7 days after mixed into solution. Mix only enough for what is needed or expected to be used within 7–10 days. Re-use left over solution when mixing the next batch. These products may also be used for daily cleaning.

For daily routine cleaning where no disease is known to be present, a solution of **5 Tablespoons of bleach to one gallon of water** is an acceptable disinfectant when applied to items that have been cleaned of mud and organic matter prior to disinfection. Warning: this solution may ruin any clothing which it contacts. Spray from scrubbing of boots or items is difficult to avoid.

The State Veterinarian is Michele Walsh, VMD. Phone: 207-287-7615. Email: michele.walsh@maine.gov